

## BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND STATISTICS [528]

### LETTERBOOKS, 1906-1917

2 reels microfilm (6 vols.)

**DESCRIPTION:** The Bureau of Statistics was created in 1901 "to collect, assort, systematize and present in annual reports to the Governor, statistical details relating to agriculture, mining, manufactures and other industries in the state." From 1907 to 1911, the State Auditor assumed control of the bureau as ex-officio Commissioner of Statistics. In 1911, the bureau was once again separated from the auditor's office, the name changed to the Bureau of Immigration, Labor and Statistics, and its reporting functions expanded. In addition to industries, the new bureau also reported on all the natural, economic, educational, and cultural resources of the state with an eye toward promoting immigration of individuals and businesses. The new bureau was also in charge of investigating and reporting unsafe working conditions and violations of labor laws. These letterbooks contain press copies of outgoing correspondence pertaining to all these duties. The diversity of topics treated makes them an excellent, if promotionally biased, source of socioeconomic data on the state in the early 20th century.

Many of the letters are to county officials, primarily the county clerk, recorder, and assessor, requesting data on county tax rates, bonded indebtedness, private mortgage indebtedness, agricultural lands and crops, names of elected officials, and expenditures on indigents. Other frequent letters are to private corporations asking for completion of mercantile reports, many of them complaining of incompletely filled out forms and pointing out the legal penalties for failure to provide the requested information. Judges and court clerks (in most cases, the court clerk was also the county clerk) were requested to list the number and sex of children committed to reform school and the other number of criminal convictions. The numbers of marriages and divorces were also to be recorded.

Copies of the standardized forms for gathering this data are sometimes included. In 1907, a new form was sent to county commissioners requesting information on roads. In 1911, forms were created for canneries, creameries, cigar manufactures, cement and plaster manufactures,

salt manufactures, soda water manufactures, pickle manufactures, railroads, telephone companies, knitting works, laundries, etc. to complete. The blanks are often accompanied by a complete mailing list of businesses to which they were sent. Forms and mailing lists were periodically updated or added to thereafter. Listings of individuals and companies engaged in everything from horse breeding to copper mining are present.

In addition to requesting data, there are various letters to interested individuals, corporations, agencies, and professional organizations replying to their requests for information on the state. Some letters are to other state statisticians or to the federal Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization discussing economic conditions in the state, specifying where immigrant labor is needed, and noting the average wages. Other agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey and the Acting British Consul General were interested in the mineral resources of the state while a Kansas City group wanted a listing of wet and dry (liquor sales legal or prohibited) towns in Utah. Labor unions inquired regarding literacy rates and labor laws. Private corporations and individuals sought data on investment opportunities in arable land, irrigation, mining, electric railroads, oil wells, etc. The broadest requests for information often come from publishers seeking to include information on Utah in their books. Letters of reply to interested individuals also cover a broad spectrum of topics, from homesteading possibilities to charitable institutions to the numbers of male and female suicides. These replies were often cover letters accompanying a copy of a published report.

Copies of parts of reports are also included. At the back of the first letterbook is a chart and discussion of the salt industry. A twenty page essay on agriculture and irrigation appears at the beginning of the second, and a more general promotional report on the state's resources appears in the middle under the title "Homeseeker's Opportunities." Another regarding homeseeking occurs at the beginning of the third volume. The fourth volume has eight pages entitled "Facts about Utah" toward the beginning, and the middle of the sixth has an essay on farm lands to promote a federal land bank in the state. Charts and listings of ore production, state newspapers, liquor votes, manufactures, livestock, gun clubs, marriages and divorces, etc. are scattered throughout, as are more brief essays.

The success of promoting immigration is discussed in some correspondence, notably regarding the settlement of a Jewish colony in Sanpete County, Greek communities in Uintah County, and a Russian colony in northern Utah. Individual immigration is regularly mentioned in discussions of homesteading under the Carey desert lands act; land companies are sometimes listed.

In 1911, the bureau also assumed the responsibility of monitoring certain working conditions. Thus there are frequent letters pertaining to violations of the nine-hour day female employment law. A limited number of letters also refer to eight-hour days in mines and smelters. Other letters, to individuals, universities, and state labor or safety officials, discuss the limited number or total absence of safety inspectors and the nonexistence of labor safety laws. Questions regarding fire laws, building codes, or sanitation were referred to the cities for ordinances. After minimum wage scales for females were passed in 1913, numerous letters

pertaining to their enforcement appear; letters stating that there was no agitation for a broader minimum wage law are also noted. There are occasional responses to requests by men to retrieve unpaid wages referring them to private attorneys. Letters to federal officials and officials in other states asking for comparative labor law information appear intermittently; in particular, inquiries into workmen's compensation laws start in 1916.

The bulk of all this correspondence deals with agriculture, homesteading, mining and industry with a portion of the later correspondence dealing with female labor law enforcement. However the number of topics treated on a lesser scale is extremely broad and includes social (schools, hospitals, newspapers and magazines, etc.) factors as well as commercial. Limited correspondence also deals with administrative functions of the bureau. Letters regarding printing of annual and biennial reports are the most common. There are also regular expense account listings accompanying the mailing of vouchers to the State Board of Examiners.

The location of any letterbook(s) prior to 1906 is undetermined. The absence of a letterbook from 1909-1911 may represent a missing one, or one may never have existed, the auditor regularly complaining of the press of other duties and recommending that statistics once again be an independent office. The office of Commissioner of Immigration, Labor and Statistics was abolished in 1917 with the creation of the Industrial Commission.

**ARRANGEMENT:** Volumes and their entries are in chronological order.

**RELATED RECORDS:** Statistical information is infrequently included in the Auditor's LETTERBOOKS, series 3976. Complete reports are available under bureau, auditor, or industrial commission listings in PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, series 240; and in the bureau's REPORTS, series 1268.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** Microfilmed in 1991. Archivaly processed by A.C. Cone in 1990.

## **CONTAINER LIST**

<b>Reel</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Mar. 8, 1906-June 26, 1909
1	June 23, 1911-Apr. 11, 1912
1	Apr. 11, 1912-Jan. 9, 1914
1	Jan. 12, 1914-Dec. 9, 1914
2	Dec. 11, 1914-Mar. 6, 1916
2	Mar. 6, 1916-Nov. 17, 1916